

The Ultimate Gift

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Do this, and you will live. Luke 10:27-28 ESV

I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My rules and obey them. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11:19-20 ESV

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. John 15:12-14 NIV

When Jason's wealthy grandfather knew he was dying, he prepared his will to make a difference in each of his children's and grandchildren's lives. He was especially concerned about Jason who lived a life of luxury and self-indulgence with his grandfather's money. Red, the grandfather, hoped that the gifts he gave Jason would change Jason's life. Red wanted to teach him that the quality of life depends on how you live it, not how you spend it. Can you think of a time when money changed the way you acted?

Although Jason expected a gift of money, his grandfather gave him many gifts. The will was set up so that Jason had to complete one stage at a time, never knowing what the reward would be at the end. The first gift that Red gave his grandson was the gift of work. Jason was sent to a Texas ranch to receive his gift. When he was expected to rise early and work hard not knowing what the outcome would be, he rebelled at first but later took pride in the work he accomplished. Do you take pride in your work and do it well?

The second gift Red gave Jason was the gift of friendship. One of the stipulations of the will was that Jason had to report back to the executors with one true friend. Red removed all of Jason's financial props, cancelling his fancy apartment; taking his car, cell phone service, and credit cards. Without his grandfather's money Jason realized that he didn't have friends. What is at the center of your life?

Do you rely on your friends for what they can give you or do you appreciate them for who they are?

Red gave Jason the gift of learning. Jason had to learn how to be a friend. Initially a young girl in the park reached out him. He didn't know how to accept her friendship. It wasn't until Jason could see that other people had problems and he could help them that his life began to change.

Who are your friends? What do you do for them? What do they do that helps you?

Many gifts are identified in the movie; the gift of problems, the gift of family, the gift of laughter, the gift of dreams, the gift of giving, the gift of gratitude, the gift of a day, the gift of love, the gift of a legacy. When Jason's grandfather challenged him to dream, Jason realized that he didn't have dream of his own but he could help make other people's dreams come true.

What is your dream for the future? How can you help make someone else's dreams come true?

All of Red's family wanted his money when he died.

By following his grandfather's steps and learning to give up his selfishness and resentment, Jason's life was changed. When his life was changed he also received the gift he desired. The Bible tells us to seek God's ways first and then He will give us the life that we desire.

Dear Lord, we thank You for the ultimate gift, the gift of Your love and grace to us. Take away our self centered ways. Show us how to live for You and care for each other. Bless and keep us for Jesus' sake, Amen.